

Norfolk Naval Shipyard

Last Update: May 2002

EPA Region 3 EPA ID# VA1170024813

Virginia

Portsmouth **3rd Congressional District**

Other Names:

Main Shipyard, Southgate Annex,
Scott Center Annex,

New Gosport Annex, St. Helena
Annex (Norfolk),

Paradise Creek Disposal Area

Current Site Status

In 2001, the Navy excavated 55,000 tons of abrasive blast media residues that Norfolk Naval Shipyard ('NNSY) used in the 1970s to fill approximately four acres at the New Gosport Annex, which borders along Paradise Creek. As a result of the excavation, the Navy was able to create 1.9 acres of new tidal wetlands, planted with native spartina grasses, to help reduce urban sediment contamination in Paradise Creek and increase wetlands buffers in the Elizabeth River watershed.

In 2001, the Navy completed an ecological assessment of Annexes that border along Paradise Creek. The Navy, EPA and the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality have also completed evaluation of any other potential sites at the Main Shipyard, screened out any that may need further study and, as a result, the Navy initiated site-

specific sampling in three general areas to identify any potential releases or if in-depth remedial investigation may be needed in the areas being sampled.

In 2002, the Navy plans to finalize the long-term care and maintenance requirements for two remaining landfills near Paradise Creek, which will be necessary prior to making final remedial decisions for those landfills. In 2002, the Navy will consider how to best to address contamination at the NNSY Soutgate Annex, where Navy soil contamination extends onto the adjacent Atlantic Wood Industries Inc. NPL site. The Navy, EPA, Virginia Department of Environmental Quality, and Atlantic Wood Industries are discussing a proposal to coordinate a single cleanup effort which would address the soil contamination on both the Navy and Atlantic Wood Industries properties.

Site Description

The NNSY is the oldest shipyard in the United States devoted exclusively to ship repair and overhaul dating to 1767. The shipyard is located in the tidewater region of southeastern Virginia along the Southern Branch of the Elizabeth River and Paradise Creek, near the mouth of Chesapeake Bay. Fisheries and other sensitive environments are located near the site. NNSY is also adjacent to the Atlantic Wood Industries NPL site. Activities at the shipyard include metal forming, repair and installation of mechanical and electrical equipment, metal fabrication, metal plating, and painting operations. Industrial shops at generate large quantities of industrial wastes, scrap metal, waste oils, hydraulic oils, cutting oils, and oils contaminated with polychlorinated biphenyls ('PCBs'), spent cleaners, solvents, paint, paint sludges, thinners, blasting residues, asbestos, batteries, plating wastes, and cleaning boilers solutions.

Site Responsibility

This site is being addressed though federal actions.


NPL Listing History

This site was proposed to the National Priorities List of the most serious uncontrolled or abandoned hazardous waste sites requiring long-term remedial action on March 6, 1998. This site was formally added to the list on July 22, 1999. The St. Helena Annex (in Norfolk, VA) was not included in the final listing, and

has been addressed under separate cleanup authorities.

Threats and Contaminants

Before the shipyard began using the industrial waste treatment plant ('IWTP') in 1979, numerous industrial wastes generated in shops or by waterfront maintenance of naval vessels frequently reached storm drains. The storm sewer system drains all areas of the shipyard, independent of the sanitary sewer system, and discharges without treatment to the Southern Branch of the Elizabeth River and Paradise Creek at various locations. Other industrial wastes that were not suitable for reuse or reclamation were disposed on site. Historically, solid waste disposal areas were located in the southern portion of the shipyard, and at Annexes which border along Paradise Creek, i.e., Scott Center Landfill, Sanitary Landfill, Chemical Waste Pits, Hydraulic Fill Area, Bermed Chemical Disposal Area, and Acetylene Waste Lagoon. Solid wastes included abrasive blast media residues, sludge from the IWTP, and fly and bottom ash.

Contaminant descriptions and associated risk factors are available on the Agency for Toxic Substance and Disease Registry, an arm of the CDC, web site at <http://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/hazdat.html> 

Cleanup Progress

NNSY began environmental studies in the mid-1980s, and renewed study efforts in 1996, primarily at the NNSY Annexes which border along Paradise Creek. The Navy strategy has been to complete the Paradise Creek studies first. In 2001, New Gosport Annex received priority for the excavation of abrasive blast media residues near Paradise Creek. The Navy also gave priority to additional investigation of localized groundwater contamination at the St. Helena Annex, in Norfolk, VA, in order to allow plans to proceed for transfer of the St. Helena Annex to the Norfolk Shipbuilding and Drydock Corporation ('NORSHIPCO*', subsidiary of U.S. Marine Corp.) Active groundwater remediation was not required and deed restrictions will prohibit future use of the groundwater there.

The Navy's base-wide re-evaluating all potential areas of concern in collaboration with the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality

and EPA, and the subsequent ongoing site-specific sampling in three general areas within the Main Shipyard will determine any impacts or if more in-depth remedial investigation is needed within the Main Shipyard. Any additional studies or response actions that may be warranted will be incorporated into a site management plan.

The Main Shipyard, Southgate Annex, and Paradise Creek Disposal Area each border the Atlantic Wood Industries Inc. NPL site. The Navy is a potentially responsible party at the Atlantic Wood Industries Inc. NPL site, and Navy and Atlantic Wood Industries properties each have soil, sediment, and groundwater contamination issues to be addressed. These site-specific complexities have affected the schedules and progress for both sites. To address these concerns, EPA, the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality, Atlantic Wood Industries Inc., and the Navy have increased discussions and cleanup coordination efforts at both sites. As a result, EPA and the Navy are currently discussing a proposal to coordinate a single cleanup effort which would address the soil contamination on both the Navy and Atlantic Wood Industries properties.

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The administrative record can be reviewed at the following location:

Norfolk Naval Shipyard

Portsmouth, VA

Portsmouth Public Library

Portsmouth, VA